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Approved For Release 2004/07/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004500280001-3

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14 April 1954

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Copy No. 76

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

DOCUMENT NO. 29
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2009
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 28/12/79 REVIEWER:

[Redacted]

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State Dept. review completed

Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

[Redacted]

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SOVIET UNION

1. Bohlen notes Soviet concern over American statements on Indochina:

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Ambassador Bohlen reports that the recent indications of the firmness of American policy regarding Indochina have produced the "characteristic uncertainty" which Moscow displays when opposed with real determination. He finds that the Soviet press has contained "a distinct note of concern and even disarray" over Indochina developments. Pravda's charge that American efforts to provoke Chinese intervention in Indochina have failed--judged on the basis of past reactions--reflects the Soviet government's serious concern at being drawn into a situation which it wishes to avoid.

Bohlen doubts that the Soviet leaders are willing or even able to force China to abandon Ho Chi Minh, as they forced the Satellites to abandon the Greek guerrillas in 1948. He believes, however, that a demonstration of Western unity would enhance any possibility that may exist of an acceptable solution in Indochina.

Comment: Pravda has avoided any hint of possible Communist reaction to greater American participation in the Indochina war except to say that a "repetition of the Korean variant" will end in "defeat for the aggressors." Moscow's attitude of caution and uncertainty was also evident in Pravda's remark that international reaction to Dulles' proposal shows that it is impossible even to think of submitting the question of intervention in Indochina to the United Nations.

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SOUTH ASIA

4. Comment on alleged plans for Afghan-Pakistani confederation:

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[redacted] Press reports of secret negotiations for a "confederation" of Afghanistan and Pakistan apparently originate in the efforts of the Pakistani ambassador to Kabul, Colonel Shah, to promote a settlement of the seven-year-old Pushtoonistan dispute between the two countries, as well as from rumors of Afghan interest in the Turkish-Pakistani defense agreement.

Afghanistan has intimated that it might be willing to enter into a pact similar to the Turkish-Pakistani agreement if the Pushtoonistan dispute were settled, and the Afghans appear more seriously interested in settling this problem than at any time in the past. [redacted]

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[redacted] these developments are extremely unlikely under present conditions.

Moscow, whose broadcasts quickly seized on the first press story of the "confederation" project, may use the rumors to increase the pressure it is reportedly exerting to get the Afghans to accept more Soviet technical and possibly military aid. The Soviet-Afghan treaty of 1931, still in force, prohibits Afghanistan from entering any political or military alliance or agreement "which might be directed" against the USSR. [redacted]

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